



Patricia Jursik *Update*

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E-NEWS

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Finance and Audit

Judiciary, Safety and General Services

Personnel, Chair

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee on Long Range Transportation Planning

Economic Stimulus Task Force

Long Range Strategic Plan Steering Committee, Chair

RTA Task Force, Chair

Dear Constituents and Friends:

I sincerely wish that you and your families enjoy safe, restful holidays!

Pat Jursik



2011 Budget

Last month, I reported on my support for the Finance Committee's proposed budget. I expressed concern that the County Board would add programs potentially increasing the tax levy; this is what occurred. The final Board budget came in at a 2.4% tax levy increase. I voted against this budget because of the additional programs. The final vote for the 2011 budget was 10-9 with my vote in the minority. It is illustrative to note how close these votes have been.

As in prior years, the County Executive vetoed 15 of the Board's amendments. I supported many of those vetoes of additional spending. After the vetoes by the County Executive and the override of some vetoes by the Board with a supermajority vote of at least 13, the final tax levy increased by 2.4% or just 0.3% over the original Finance Committee's recommendation. The final budget is comprised of \$263 million of tax levy and \$1.46 billion in total expenditures. I report separately on some of the other vetoes here:

Universal Screening

One of the County Executive's vetoes removed funding for universal screening, a pilot program in the courts, for a ½ year cost of \$250,000. I voted to override this veto because there is a very good likelihood of getting a grant for the final ½ year, but we must demonstrate our commitment to the program to be eligible for the federal justice grant. This program screens newly charged individuals for the likelihood of returning after release. A defendant likely to miss court or be rearrested may require more supervision than one who has little risk. Without such information, it is difficult for a judge to release an individual into the community prior to trial or other proceedings.

Like expensive hospital beds, jail beds cost money. It is anticipated that this program will actually save money. The City of Pittsburgh demonstrated a 30% decrease in the use of jail beds thanks to universal screening, resulting in far greater savings than the cost of the program. Well over 90% of all large cities already use this tool. Our judges and district attorneys strongly favor this program and even the County Executive touted universal screening as a worthwhile program, but he was unwilling to find money to pay for it.

I will continue to monitor universal screening for its cost effectiveness to the County. I was one of 13 votes to override the County Executive. It is the right thing to do for individuals in the system, and I believe this program will actually pay for itself after we have a chance to study cost savings following implementation.

Parks and Culture Line Item

This initiative arose from strategic planning and would create a separate line item on our property tax bill for parks and culture to highlight County tax levy support. Unlike many County programs such as the courts or health and human needs that receive tax dollars through state and federal programs, our parks and cultural institutions such as the Zoo, museums, Marcus Center and others are largely supported by property tax levy. When mandated services as the courts and human needs are not fully supported by the levels of government that created the program, our County government has had to take money from our parks/culture budget to supplement the lack of full support. This has eroded our ability to fund our parks/culture budget.

The County Executive vetoed this initiative even though it does not involve additional tax dollars. Our Board overrode the veto; we now need to work with the Department of Revenue and local city/village governments to complete the initiative. Stay tuned.

Employee Benefits

The most contentious issue in the budget involved employee benefit-givebacks. Both the County Executive and the Finance Committee outlined plans that reduced benefits.

I have received several calls asking why I did not support the County Executive's plan which would have given more savings as opposed to the one developed by Finance. The answer is that the County Executive's plan was neither legal nor achievable. It was, simply put, a fiction that arrived at a 0% tax increase budget but which could not be implemented. Most of the County Executive's plan required union and non-represented employees to reduce pension and health care benefits. The Finance Committee redesigned the plan for only our non-represented employees. It requires a 4% salary contribution to the pension fund. It also substantially increased health insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays. To provide incentive for other employees, it also gave a 1% salary increase next year and 1% the following year. This resulted in a net 2% decrease in wages.

Our labor attorneys advised the Board that by structuring reductions in this way, we would have a good chance of putting such a plan on the negotiating table for our union workers with at least a chance of prevailing. The same attorneys advised that unions cannot be forced to take the plan suggested by the County Executive nor would it be likely to prevail in bargaining. If anyone wants to discuss this in further detail with me, please feel free to contact my office.

Farm and Fish Hatchery

Yes, one more time! The County Board overrode the County Executive on this Parks program costing about \$139,400. The farm and fish hatchery is now actually run under a County contract by Hunger Task Force (HTF). HTF grows food at the Franklin (House of Correction) farm for their food pantry program and also runs the fish hatchery. The fish not only stock our County ponds and lagoons but also are fed to Zoo animals such as the penguins.

Since my kitchen window provides a fish eye's view of the pond, I have witnessed

many first-day fishing events at the Sheridan Pond after the pond is stocked. There were so many youngsters ringing the pond last year that there literally was barely room to add another fisherman. Several fishing clubs participate in the annual fishing and ice fishing clinics for children, providing poles and bait to those kids that do not have their own.

If we cut this program, we would need to add additional resources to the Zoo budget to cover the costs of purchasing fish for the Zoo. Is this really any different than providing tennis courts, basketball courts, golf courses and other recreational venues? Many children and adults enjoy fishing in our ponds and lagoons. And, no, the DNR will not stock our County ponds and lagoons as some argue.

2011 Furlough Layoff Plans

This year will continue to present difficult times for our County employees and the services they provide. Since the 2010 budget required employees to reduce their pension multiplier by 20%; our largest union, DC48 AFSCME, did not agree to the reduction; and mandatory bargaining has not been completed, the 26 furlough days that resulted from such savings must again be imposed in 2011 until this reduction is realized in bargaining with the unions. In addition, the 2011 budget also involved 65 layoffs. Citizens should expect service reductions or delays due to furloughs and layoffs.

Frosty Fable at the Domes

Experience the Mitchell Horticultural Conservatory under a holiday transformation, replete with hundreds of glistening crimson poinsettias and a beautifully decorated tree. Relish five concerts in December as part of the “Music Under Glass” winter series.



Regular admission applies. Milwaukee County residents with ID enjoy free entry on Mondays from 9 a.m. to Noon, excluding major holidays and celebrations. For details, visit <http://county.milwaukee.gov/MitchellParkConserva10116.htm> or call 649-9830.

Give the Gift of Parks

Consider visiting the Milwaukee County Parks kiosk at Southridge Mall or the Parks office (9480 Watertown Plank Rd.) for your holiday shopping. Now available:

Dog tags for Milwaukee County off-leash dog parks

\$25 annual fee or \$15 for seniors or people with disabilities (dog license and rabies tag numbers required)



Golf gift cards and golf discount card renewals

Shoppers making a \$100 purchase of golf gift cards will receive \$20 in free golf!

Unlimited golf membership

Eagle package (all Milwaukee County courses with the exception of Brown Deer): \$999

Hole-in-one package (all Milwaukee County courses including Brown Deer): \$1,499

Community Calendar

Thursday, December 2 – Music Under Glass, 6:30-8:30pm

Streetlight with Warren Wiegratz. Enjoy the new lighting of the domes with light shows at the break and following the concert. At The Domes, 524 S. Layton Blvd. Regular admission applies. 649-9830 www.county.milwaukee.gov/FloralShowampEventSc10360/MusicUnderGlass.htm

Saturday, December 4 – Christmas at the Depot, 9am-2pm

Pictures with Santa. Bakery, hot lunch, poinsettias and candy for purchase. Sponsored by Cudahy Historical Society. At the Depot, 4647 S Kinnickinnic Av., Cudahy.

Saturday, December 4 – South Milwaukee Downtown Winter Market, 10am-3pm

At Bucyrus International's Heritage Building (enter parking lot at 10th Av, 1 block north of Milwaukee Av.).

Saturday, December 4 – Family FREE Day at the Zoo, 9:30am-4:30pm

All visitors receive free admission. The parking fee remains in effect. At Milwaukee County Zoo, 10001 West Blue Mound Road, Milwaukee. milwaukeezoo.org 256-5466

Wednesday, December 8 – Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Presents: Hometown Holiday Concert in South Milwaukee, 7:30pm

Celebrate the most wonderful time of the year with songs like "Greensleeves," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," a very special Christmas Carol Sing-Along and more. At South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, 901 15th Av, South Milwaukee. To purchase tickets, please contact 766-5049. www.southmilwaukeekeepac.org/index.htm

Thursday, December 9 – Friends of Grant Park & "Park Watch" potluck social with Owl Prowl, 6pm

Come see the beautifully decorated Clubhouse (courtesy of the Friends of the Mill Pond). Please bring a food or beverage to share, or if time is tight, just bring yourself! There may be live madrigal music. At some point following the potluck, all are welcome to join in a walk on the golf course as part of an Owl Prowl. Please dress for the weather and be aware that searching for owls requires a certain level of quiet. At Grant Park Clubhouse, 100 Hawthorne Ave, South Milwaukee. 764-9244 or 764-0612

Saturday, December 11 – Holiday Bake & Cookie Sale, 1pm

Sponsored by Friends of Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse. At Grant Park Clubhouse, 100 Hawthorne Av, South Milwaukee. 571-1191

Monday, December 13 – Cudahy Historical Society and Cudahy Family Library Annual Holiday Dinner, 5pm

Dinner with live entertainment at Pulaski Inn. Tickets for purchase at Cudahy Family Library, 3500 Library Dr., Cudahy.

Tuesday, December 14 – Friends of Mill Pond meeting, 6:30pm

At Marquette Manor (2409 10th Av, South Milwaukee). 571-1191

Thursday, December 16 – County Board Meeting, 9:30am

At Milwaukee County Courthouse, Room 200

Saturday, December 18 - 2010 Christmas Bird Count, throughout the day, pre-registration required

Join in the 111th annual National Audubon Society count either from the comfort of your yard or out in the field with thousands of other counters around the Country. In Southeast Milwaukee County we are a part of the "the Hales Corners Circle." For details about the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, please visit www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/ or contact coordinator Mark Verhagen at Wehr Nature Center, 414-425-8550 mark.verhagen@ces.uwex.edu, or Betsy of South Milwaukee at 764-9244, betsyacorn@aol.com

Saturday, December 18 – 20 Greatest Hits of Johnny Cash, 7:30pm

Liam Ford presents an electrifying portrayal of The Man in Black, sharing classics from Cash's early days at Sun Records to his final recordings with Rick Rubin. At South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, 901 15th Av, South Milwaukee. To purchase tickets, please contact 766-5049. www.southmilwaukeekeepac.org/index.htm

Monday, December 27 – SeniorLAW at Kelly Senior Center, 10-11am

Benefits Specialist Jessica will be present to provide advice.

Wednesday, December 29 – Cudahy Neighborhood Watch meeting, 6pm

At Cudahy Family Library, 3500 Library Dr., Cudahy. 414-324-5531

Saturday, December 25 –FREE Day at the Zoo, 9:30am-2:30pm

Milwaukee County residents with ID receive free admission. The parking fee remains in effect. At Milwaukee County Zoo, 10001 West Blue Mound Road, Milwaukee. milwaukeezoo.org 256-5466

Saturday, January 1, 2010 – Cool Kite Festival, Noon - 5pm

The “Kite Whisperer” will provide kite-flying lessons. All are welcome to participate in this “fun flight” with a kite brought from home or one purchased at the event. Witness the giant kites of Yves Laforest. Watch ice artists in action and take a horse-drawn carriage ride for a small fee. Complementary hot chocolate and coffee while it lasts thanks to Caribou Coffee. Dress warm. At Veterans Park, 1010 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr., Milwaukee. www.giftofwings.com 277-9121

Ongoing:

Music Under Glass, Tuesdays and Thursdays until March 31, 6:30-8:30pm Enjoy the new lighting of the domes with light shows at the break and following the concert. At The Domes, 524 S. Layton Blvd. 649-9830. [Regular admission applies](#). Check out the schedule of music at: www.county.milwaukee.gov/FloralShowampEventSc10360/MusicUnderGlass.htm



ICE SKATING

At Sheridan Park Lagoon, 4800 S. Lake Dr, Cudahy
Bring your own skates. Open weather permitting.
Call 257-PARK (7275) for current conditions.

Sheridan Lagoon opens when ice is sufficiently thick.
M-F: 3-8 pm; Sat-Sun: Noon-8pm

At Red Arrow Park, 920 N. Water St, Milwaukee
(accessible via Route 15, www.ridemcts.com)
FREE rink, \$7 skate rental (includes tax) or bring your own. Enjoy the adjacent warming house with restrooms and hot beverages! Closed for blizzard, wind chill or cold weather advisories from the National Weather Service. Details: <http://county.milwaukee.gov/RedArrow11930.htm>

Red Arrow Rink opens Thursday, December 9, weather permitting.
Dec. 9-21: M-Th 11am-9pm, F & Sat 11am-11pm, Sun 11am-8pm
Dec. 22-24: 11am-11pm
Dec. 25: 5-11pm
Dec. 26-30: 11am-11pm
Dec. 31: 11am-2am